

Parent Association Constitution

ST. ENDA'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

MAY 2013

Education Act 1998

Section 26 states:

“A Parent Association shall promote the interests of all the students in a school in cooperation with the Board of Management (BoM), principal, teachers and students of a school and for that purpose may:

- advise the principal or BoM on any matter relating to the school and the principal or BoM, as the case may be, shall have regard to any such advice and
- adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the principal, in the operation of the school”.

Supporting Each Other Guidelines

The National Parents Council-Primary (NPC-P) and the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) have developed ‘Supporting Each Other – a guide to best practice for the effective partnership between Principals and Parent Associations’.

Name of the Association

The parents and guardians of all students attending St. Enda’s National School shall be considered members of the Parent Association. The committee, who are elected by the Parent Association and who represent the Association, shall be called “St. Enda’s National School Parent Association Committee.”

Aims of the Parent Association

The purpose of the Parent Association shall be to provide a structure through which the parents / guardians of children attending St. Enda’s N.S. can work together for the best possible education for their children. The Parent Association shall work with the students, principal, teachers, and BoM to build an effective partnership between home and school. Specifically, the Parent Association aims

- 1.To enable parents to play a meaningful role in supporting the aims & objectives of the school.
- 2.To enable parents to contribute to an enhanced learning environment for the pupils.
- 3.To ensure that the work of the whole school community is at all times focused on the collective needs of all the children in the school.
4. To identify and make available the skills and talents of individual parents that may be valuable to the school.

Parent Association Committee

An AGM will be held each October and all parents are invited to attend. At the AGM the chairperson shall read a report of the year's activities and the treasurer shall present a financial report.

Elections for the Parent Association Committee will be carried out following the AGM. The school secretary will send out nomination forms to all parents/guardians and the candidates who receive the most nominations/votes shall be deemed elected. If the total number of nominations exceed the number of vacancies, there shall be an election among the serving committee to fill the balance of places vacated by the outgoing members of the committee. **Efforts to have a gender balance shall be made. A minimum of three men and three women shall be sought.**

The Parent Association Committee shall consist of not less than eight and not more than fourteen members (together with the non-voting consultative members who shall consist of the principal, teachers and chairperson of BoM, who shall not be officers of the Association, but shall have the right to attend meetings).

The committee shall then, from its own members, nominate/elect a chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

Those who have served one year on the committee will automatically be re-elected to serve their second year. Office holders shall also hold their position for two years.

Committee members may be re-elected after the two-year period if required.

If the membership of the committee falls below eight at any time, the committee shall have the power to co-opt a parent/guardian to fill the remaining places.

The new committee shall have their first committee meeting at the earliest opportunity following the election of the Parent Association Committee.

A quorum shall consist of five committee members including the non-voting consultative members. Between meetings, the principal and the chairperson shall be in regular communication. The chairperson has responsibility for internal communication within the Parents Association Committee.

Meetings shall be held in St. Enda's National School.

The chairperson shall submit an agenda to the principal for approval before the meeting. Minutes of all meetings will be recorded. The Parent Association

Committee Meetings are not a forum for complaints. The agenda, as agreed by the chairperson and principal, shall be followed. Any parent who raises complaints shall be referred to The Parental Complaints Policy. The Parent Association Committee shall not involve itself in the professional work of a teacher within the classroom. The principal, Department of Education Inspector and the BoM have responsibility for teaching and learning.

Decisions at meetings of the Parent Association Committee shall generally be arrived at by consensus. If there are different motions or viewpoints then decisions shall be arrived at by a simple majority show of hands.

The Parent Association Committee may set up sub committees to assist in the carrying out of specific projects or activities. The sub committees may also co opt parents/ guardians to assist with their work. The sub committees may not make decisions (other than in relation to the effective carrying out of their project/activity) and are fully accountable to the Parent Association Committee.

Extraordinary general meetings may be called, on not less that seven days notice, by mobile phone text, phone call or by post to each parent to each parent and guardian. A quorum of the Committee must be present and consent to same.

Work of Parent Association Committee

The work of the Parent Association Committee will focus on three areas which are in line with the aims. Namely; Consultation, Support, Fundraising.

1. Consultation

When developing policies that require input from parents, the principal will give the draft policy to the Parent Association Committee for their consideration. It will also be placed on the school website. All parents will be notified that the Parent Association Committee have hard copies, the draft policy is available on the website and that a hard copy can be requested from the office. A period of time will be set for getting the views of parents. After this timeframe, the principal will consult with the Parent Association Committee for their feedback. Parents can also contact the principal directly to air their views. The principal will then send the draft policy along with feedback from staff and parents to the BoM. The BoM will then meet to consider the draft policy along with all observations. The BoM will decide on the final policy and this will be communicated to parents.

2. Supporting the work of the school

The principal may ask the Parent Association Committee to assist with the work of the school e.g. organising book rental, organising volunteers to assist with supervision on tours, assisting with the organisation of school concerts and events etc.

Before an event, the teacher will discuss the activity with the parents involved, how it will be organized and what is needed from parents.

The happiness, welfare and safety of our children are our primary concerns. Observations of children are strictly confidential.

Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.

Discipline remains the responsibility of the teacher.

Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child.

No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the teacher, and must be accompanied by receipts.

The principal has the final say in the event that he/she feels it is falling short of its original aims and objectives.

The school ethos must be upheld at all times. Therefore, respect for all the partners in education - children, teachers and parents - must be upheld at all times.

Parental involvement is organised by, and with the approval of, the principal, through the Parent Association Committee and or teachers.

Please note that Appendix A contains guidelines for parents in the classroom and a confidentiality form.

3. Fundraising

The rules governing both Board of Management and Parent Association finances are clearly laid out in the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association Handbook. The Board of Management information manual (p.149) states that:

- A Parent Association is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the Association.
- Full accounts must be maintained and presented at the Parent Association AGM in accordance with the rules of the Association.
- The Parent Association should consult with the Board about fundraising for the school or school projects.
- The approval of the Board is needed before these funds are raised.
- The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of Management, in consultation with the Parent Association.
- The Board prepares a total account of income and expenditure at the end of each year and this is available to parents. (Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure, Clause 19)
- Any funds raised must be used for the purpose/s for which the money was Collected.
- If, in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this

to the Parent Association and, where appropriate, the local community. In any event, the funds must be used for the school. The change of purpose for which the funds are used will be decided by the Board in consultation with the Parent Association.

Parents and Boards of Management

Two parents – one mother and one father – of children in the school are elected to the Board of Management either by postal ballot or at a specially-convened meeting. The two elected parents are then the ‘nominees’ of the Parent Body on the Board of Management. As is the case with the one elected staff nominee and the two co-opted community representatives, the two elected parents are now part of a ‘Body Corporate’ i.e. the Board of Management, whose function it is to manage the school. The two parent nominees contribute to and uphold the decisions and policies of the Board of Management. This means that, other than the agreed report from each Board of Management meeting, all other matters must remain confidential.

They have no function in bringing individual parental complaints or the Parent Association Committee’s issues to the Board. Such issues can be dealt with through the agreed complaints procedure.

The two parent nominees on the Board of Management are entitled to be members of the Parent Association Committee, and indeed that helps the nominees remain in touch with the work of the Parent Association Committee.

The NPCP and IPPN recommend, however, that the BoM parent nominees should not hold officer roles on the Parent Association Committee, in order to avoid any possible conflict of interest with their role as members of the Board of Management. (NPC-P and IPPN, Supporting Each Other, Section 3.1)

Ratification

Agreed by St. Enda’s National School Parents Association on 22/05/2013

Pat Dowling (Chairperson)

Ratified by the Board of Management on 10/06/2013

Ann Harrington (Chairperson)

Appendix A

Guidelines for Getting Involved in the classroom.

- Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose
- The happiness, welfare and safety of our children are our primary concern. A child's personal history and academic achievements are strictly confidential. Any doubts about issues of confidentiality must be discussed with the teacher
- Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline remains the responsibility of the teacher.
- All work will be supervised by the teacher.
- Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child.
- Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the teacher before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.
- In the interest of safety, toddlers and younger children (non-pupils) cannot be accommodated during a classroom activity.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial
- No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the teacher, and must be accompanied by receipts.
- In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks, parents will meet with the teacher to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group, has something similar already been done etc.). The teacher has the final say in the event that he/she feels it is falling short of its original aims and objectives.
- The school ethos must be upheld at all times.
- Parents will be asked to sign this agreement.

Signed

Date
